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REPORT

OF THE

DELEGATION TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

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DELEGATION TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, February 21, 1986.

Hon. LES ASPIN,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Attached is a report that covers the recent trip of an eleven-member committee delegation to French Polynesia, New Zealand, Antarctica, Australia and Fiji, over the January 6 to January 21 timeframe.

The purpose of the trip was to obtain an assessment of the impact of several recent events on U.S. relations with our partners in the ANZUS Alliance and with the smaller island nations of the region. The report findings are based on extensive discussions and meetings with area political and military leaders.

I shall appreciate your approval of the report so that it may be printed.

Sincerely,

SAMUEL S. STRATTON,
Chairman, South Pacific Delegation.

Enc.

Approved for printing:
LES ASPIN.

REPORT OF THE DELEGATION TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

INTRODUCTION

A delegation of 11 members of the House Committee on Armed Services visited the South Pacific area and Antarctica between January 6 and January 21. The group visited French Polynesia, New Zealand, Australia and Fiji.

The Pacific Basin is critical to the strategic interests of the United States. More than 30 percent of U.S. trade is conducted with nations in, or bordering on, the Pacific. Mutual security treaties link the United States with several East Asian or Pacific nations. The major security interests of the United States in the area include promotion of regional stability, strengthening collective defense capabilities, and the maintenance of important economic ties.

The purpose of the trip was to obtain for the committee an assessment of the impact of several recent events on U.S. relations with our partners in the ANZUS Alliance and with the smaller island nations of the region. Foremost among those events are the efforts to establish in the South Pacific region in general, and New Zealand in particular, nuclear-free zones. The delegation was also concerned by recent efforts of the Soviet Union to expand its presence and to increase its influence among the smaller island nations of the South Pacific. In addition, the delegation wanted to visit the sites of National Science Foundation programs in the Antarctic and to examine the logistics and transportation support provided by the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Army and Air Force.

Nuclear testing in the Pacific has long been a concern of the island nations, including Australia and New Zealand. The establishment of the Pacific Test Center by the Government of France at Mururoa Atoll in French Polynesia in 1966 became the focus of the opposition of the surrounding nations. Between 1966 and 1974, 41 atmospheric tests were conducted at Mururoa. Because of severe protests from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and other states, France discontinued atmospheric tests in 1974. Since that time the tests have been limited to underground explosions. The surrounding nations have continued to protest all nuclear testing by the French Government.

The failure to convince France to suspend nuclear testing caused Australia to take the lead in the South Pacific Forum of 13 independent nations in developing a treaty to establish the South Pacific as a nuclear-free zone. Had it not been for the Australian leadership, it is possible that the treaty and protocols might have been much more stringent. That effort culminated in the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (SPNFZT), which was adopted by the forum in August 1985. The treaty will become effective when it is ratified by eight of the states of the forum.

In the 1984 election campaign, the New Zealand Labor Party platform included a commitment to make New Zealand a nuclear-free zone. After being elected in July 1984, the Labor Government adopted a policy prohibiting port visits by nuclear-propelled and nuclear-armed foreign warships. That policy was first implemented in February 1985 when U.S.S. *Buchanan,* a conventionally powered warship, was denied permission to visit a New Zealand port as part of the ANZUS "Sea Eagle" exercise. The U.S. request was denied because the New Zealand Government did not feel assured the ship was not carrying nuclear weapons. Since that time there have been no further U.S. Navy requests for its ships to visit New Zealand ports.

In a desire to make that policy permanent, a bill, captioned "The Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Bill," was introduced into the New Zealand Parliament in December 1985. The bill provides that nuclear-propelled ships would be prohibited from entering the internal waters of New Zealand. It would allow entry of other foreign warships only when the prime minister is satisfied that they will not be carrying any nuclear-explosive device upon their entry into the internal waters of the country. The bill provides that, in arriving at his decision, the prime minister shall have regard to all relevant information and advice that may be available, including information and advice concerning the strategic and security interests of New Zealand.

Another, and more ominous, threat in the South Pacific area is the rapidly expanding presence of the Soviet Union. That presence is best exemplified by the Soviet Pacific Fleet, which increased from 95 ships in 1982 to 101 ships in 1985. Admiral Ronald Hays, Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), also reported that recently there has been a significant increase in the quality of the ships which are assigned to the Soviet Pacific Fleet. Perhaps the greatest advantage obtained by the Soviets has been access to the port at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. Operating from that base Soviet ships and aircraft from Da Nang have tremendously increased the ability to interdict sea lines of communication in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. For example, Soviet Backfire bombers operating from Vietnam could reach targets in Australia.

The Soviet Union is also seeking to expand its influence in the South Pacific through lucrative fishing agreements with the island nations. An agreement with Kiribati provides the Soviet Union with fishing rights in the territorial seas of that nation. A similar agreement is expected to be concluded with Vanuato. These agreements demonstrate a higher level of Soviet interest in the South Pacific, and a more sophisticated approach than has been the case in the past. The initial penetration of the island nations through fishing agreements could allow the Soviet Union to expand its interests in economic and military fields.

In reviewing the Antarctic research programs carried on by the National Science Foundation, the delegation began at the support facility at Christchurch, New Zealand. It proceeded from there to McMurdo Station, the largest of the U.S. facilities in Antarctica, and then flew to Amundsen/Scott South Pole Station.

As a result of its visits and discussions, the delegation makes the following findings and recommendations:

FINDINGS

1. The Pacific Basin is of vital importance to the security of the free world. In recent years the Soviet Union has increased its presence in the South Pacific. The Soviets have improved the quality of their Pacific fleet and routinely conduct operations out of the naval base at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, which is in a position to cut Japan's oil lifeline at any time. They have also embarked upon a program to expand their fishing rights in the territorial waters of the island nations of the region. This increased Soviet activity constitutes a threat to free-world security in the region.

2. The ANZUS Treaty is a key element in the system of free world alliances whose objectives are the maintenance of regional stability. The treaty has provided an effective security structure in the South Pacific for more than 33 years.

3. The present Government of New Zealand interprets ANZUS as a regional treaty rather than a component of a world-wide system of alliances aimed at the deterrence of nuclear war, as well as regional conflict. It claims to perceive no threat in the region, nor from any external power, thereby disregarding the global threat.

4. The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, a 1985 agreement among the 13 nations of the South Pacific Forum, prohibits the acquisition, stationing or testing of nuclear weapons by any of the signatory nations. Initiated by Australia, the treaty protects each nation's sovereign rights regarding access to its ports and airfields, while also protecting the right of innocent passage in international waters.

5. The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty is not inconsistent with ANZUS. Its provisions would not interfere with the obligations of the ANZUS nations in carrying out the ANZUS pact.

6. A New Zealand Government policy, adopted after the 1984 election, prohibits access to New Zealand ports by nuclear-propelled ships and ships capable of carrying nuclear weapons, unless the absence of nuclear weapons is certified. With this action, New Zealand has rendered the treaty fully unworkable and made it impossible for the United States to fulfill its obligations and responsibilities under the ANZUS Alliance, as the United States must maintain its policy neither to confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons on its warships.

7. In December 1985, legislation was introduced in the New Zealand Parliament that would codify the current prohibition on nuclear-propelled ships and give the prime minister the responsibility for divining through some unfathomable process whether other ships seeking port access are carrying nuclear weapons.

8. Neither the current policy nor the proposed legislation of the New Zealand government is consistent with its obligations under the ANZUS Treaty. In addition, neither is required by the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

9. The effect of the Government of New Zealand's proposed legislation on U.S. Navy ship visits would cause a severe disruption in the ANZUS Alliance. The adoption of such legislation by New Zealand would force unilateral limits on the United States without the approval of the other partners of the alliance. This would consti-

tute a de facto abrogation of the treaty and would threaten the continuation of ANZUS as a tripartite agreement.

Already the United States and Australia have discontinued providing New Zealand joint intelligence information, and the United States has suspended joint naval exercises with New Zealand. To that extent New Zealand's participation in the alliance has, for all practical purposes, been suspended.

10. The Government of Australia remains firmly dedicated to the continuation of the ANZUS pact. It has made its military facilities available for joint training and exercises, as we have made our facilities available to them and our other ANZUS partners. In addition, it has furnished facilities, jointly manned by Australian and U.S. personnel, that contribute to the deterrence of nuclear war.

11. French nuclear testing in French Polynesia has been the focus for most of the anti-nuclear sentiment in the South Pacific region. The Government of France, as well as the United States, recognizes that testing is essential for maintenance of a credible nuclear deterrent force. Lack of a suitable test site in France, as well as the sunk costs in the Mururoa test site, and the economic dependence of French Polynesia on the testing programs are the reasons given for continuation of the tests at that location, which is a part of France's sovereign territory.

12. The money authorized and appropriated each year for maintaining the U.S. presence in the Antarctic is well spent.

13. The National Science Foundation representatives stated that the Antarctic Treaty, which precludes all nations from establishing military bases or conducting military maneuvers or testing, is strictly observed. In accordance with the treaty, the Antarctic is a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

Recommendations

1. The United States should increase its awareness of the interests and concerns of the South Pacific nations. Historically, these nations have been friendly to the United States, and because of their strategic importance we should endeavor to preserve our ties with them.

2. Because of the actions taken unilaterally by the present Government of New Zealand, rendering it impossible for the United States to fulfill its obligations and responsibilities under the ANZUS Treaty, the United States should continue its suspension of military cooperation. In view of New Zealand's de facto abrogation of the treaty, we are left with no alternative. The delegation is not unmindful of New Zealand's past sacrifices through four wars as we fought together to preserve freedom, and we profoundly regret the actions they have taken which have brought us to this unhappy situation.

3. The United States should continue its efforts with the New Zealand Government to seek resolution of the problem. However, in the event that present policy is continued or codified in the proposed legislation, the United States should immediately initiate the 12-month notice action required for termination of the ANZUS Pact and seek to continue our defense alliance with the Govern-

ment of Australia, unless during that time an accommodation can be reached with New Zealand.

4. When they are delivered and briefed, the United States should give deliberate and full consideration to signing the three protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. At the very least these protocols encourage the other participants in the treaty to bar port visits of ships carrying nuclear weapons, as does New Zealand. Signing them would also tend to imply that nuclear weapons are a curse when, in fact, they represent the U.S. deterrent to possible Soviet aggression in the South Pacific as well as elsewhere.

The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty

The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty was adopted by the South Pacific Forum on August 6, 1985. Nine of the forum's 13-member nations have signed the treaty—Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Tuvalu, and Western Samoa—and Fiji and Cook Islands have ratified it.

Initiated by Australia and reflecting the long-standing concerns of the South Pacific nations about nuclear matters, the treaty has five main provisions. Under the treaty, the parties agree not to:

—acquire nuclear weapons;
—station them on their territory;
—test them on their territory or help others to test;
—dump radioactive waste or help others to do so; or
—supply any nuclear equipment or material to any non-nuclear state without comprehensive safeguards like those in the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

The treaty is open for signature only by members of the South Pacific Forum. However, the United States and other nuclear states are being asked to sign three protocols to the treaty. The first—open to the United States, United Kingdom and France—would require those states not to manufacture, test or station any nuclear device on their territories in the region. The second protocol would require that the five countries possessing nuclear weapons not use or threaten to use them against parties to the treaty. The third protocol would require each of the five countries not to test nuclear explosives in the nuclear-free zone.

These protocols will be the subject of consultations between the United States and a delegation from the South Pacific nations in mid-February 1986. Talks were held on the protocols with the Government of Australia in October 1985.

The treaty leaves it to each country to decide matters of territorial access for nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed vessels or aircraft. According to Admiral Ronald Hays, USN, Commander in Chief, Pacific, the protocols would not affect the right of innocent passage on the high seas or aircraft overflight freedoms.

French Polynesia

Nuclear weapons testing by the French Government at Mururoa Atoll in French Polynesia has outraged the large majority of the population in the island nations of the South Pacific. All, with the exception of Tonga, are strongly opposed to nuclear testing, as well as nuclear waste dumping and any other form of nuclear activity.

This strong anti-nuclear sentiment was manifested in the recent adoption of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty by the 13 island nations that comprise the South Pacific Forum. At the time of the delegation visit, the treaty had been signed by 10 of the 13 members of the forum.

France views its independent nuclear deterrent force as fully compatible with the western alliance's defense policy and is adamantly opposed to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. French political leaders have emphasized that they will not be a party to any convention that does not respect the right of states to conduct nuclear tests in the region. The French point out that testing is essential to the maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons, just as the United States carries out its own nuclear testing program for the same reason. The French, after all, are a party to the NATO Treaty, and they quite rightly believe that their independent nuclear force is an essential part of the NATO nuclear deterrent. The French do not believe that necessary testing could be conducted elsewhere on French soil. France has conducted all of its nuclear testing in the South Pacific since 1966, when the Pacific Test Center was established, and is fully committed to continued testing at the Mururoa Atoll location.

MEETING WITH FRENCH HIGH COMMISSIONER BERNARD GERARD

France is a valued friend and ally and the United States recognizes and agrees that nuclear testing is essential for the maintenance of a credible nuclear deterrent force. Continuity of United States-French relations is essential to the security of the western alliance; therefore, the delegation was anxious to meet with French civilian and military leaders of the territorial government.

In the delegation's meeting with Commissioner Bernard Gerard, the nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll was discussed extensively, as was the Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and New Zealand's recent ban on U.S. nuclear ship visits. Commissioner Gerard made it clear that the French nuclear presence in the South Pacific is not a matter to be negotiated. He stressed that the matter of French sovereignty is at issue and, lacking a suitable testing site in France, the testing of nuclear weapons will continue as long as necessary at the Pacific Test Center on Mururoa Atoll, which is sovereign French territory.

In response to questions regarding the possibility of relocating the test center to France, Commissioner Gerard explained that it could not be easily transferred for several reasons, including the serious impact such a move would have on the economy of French Polynesia. One member of every four families is employed in test-related activity, and no other means of employment currently exists. More importantly, according to Commissioner Gerard, no site in France is available where the population within 1,000 kilometers of the testing site would be as low as at the Mururoa location.

Commissioner Gerard assured the delegation that nuclear testing at Mururoa is environmentally safe. He further stated there is no fear among the population and, in fact, workers bring their families to live with them at the site. As further proof, he cited a report

of an investigation conducted by scientists from New Zealand, Australia, and Papua New Guinea, who were invited by the French Government to examine the site. The report concluded there was no danger to the environment as a result of nuclear testing.

When asked if the strong anti-nuclear feelings of the people in the South Pacific region were related to the Greenpeace movement and the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* in Auckland, New Zealand harbor, the commissioner indicated that, in his opinion, the *Rainbow Warrior* incident had little to do with it.

In commenting on the New Zealand policy of banning nuclear-powered ships from its ports, the high commissioner stated his belief that this policy undermines the defense of the area. He further stated that French warships have not made port calls in New Zealand for two years.

Mr. Gerard expressed concern that, in all discussions relating to the South Pacific region, French nuclear problems are emphasized. He pointed out that the vast contributions the French have made to growth in the South Pacific in the fields of education, science, and culture are generally overlooked. As an example of cooperation, he cited the air strip constructed by the French Government at the Pacific Test Center, which can be used for other purposes such as space shuttle landings if that becomes necessary. The high commissioner expressed his hope that in the future more attention could be given to positive factors and that the United States in conjunction with France could increase assistance to the island nations.

When asked, Commissioner Gerard indicated that France would be embarrassed if the United States signed the three protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

MEETING WITH VICE ADMIRAL HUGUES

A follow-on meeting with Vice Admiral Rene Hugues, Superior Commander in French Polynesia, Commander of the Pacific Test Center, and Admiral-in-Charge of French Naval Forces in the Pacific Ocean, detailed the increasing Soviet presence in the Pacific Ocean. In particular, Admiral Hugues reviewed the extensive buildup at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam, and expressed concerns about a communist takeover of the Philippines, which he considers the key to the Pacific.

In response to questions about France's problems with the ANZUS pact countries, Admiral Hugues stated that New Zealand, and to a lesser extent Australia, whose government is more reasonable, are not as cognizant of the Soviet threat. In his opinion, their governments are forgetting that the Soviets are a very considerable nuclear power whose presence is expanding in the South Pacific region, and their major naval base in the Pacific is closer to Australia and New Zealand than it is to French Polynesia.

Regarding New Zealand's ban on visits of nuclear-propelled or nuclear-capable ships, Admiral Hugues remarked that New Zealand seems to be saying "come and defend us but don't use *all* your weapons." He further indicated his belief that the New Zealanders are under the impression that the ANZUS Treaty can be maintained under some other form, making it possible for the United

States to continue to defend them. He expressed his concern that, if the United States accepts the restrictions imposed by New Zealand on ship visits, it will spread to other areas of the world.

The admiral pointed out to the delegation that the Mururoa test site is actually closer to Honolulu than to either Sydney or Auckland. He also said that the Chinese nuclear test center is closer to Sydney than is Mururoa.

Admiral Hugues reminded the delegation that the United States is a maritime power with a maritime strategy and, if we no longer have freedom of the sea, the United States would become paralyzed. For that reason alone, Admiral Hugues believes the United States would be making a very serious mistake in signing the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty protocols, which he interprets as eventually prohibiting free transit of warships in international zones. He expressed the fear that other countries, particularly in Europe, could strongly claim they also are entitled to such a treaty.

In discussing the inroads the Russians are making in the South Pacific, Admiral Hugues pointed out that the island states have very little independent means of expanding their economies and, therefore, are extremely vulnerable to lucrative offers by the Soviets. Competing on a commercial basis with the Soviet Union is difficult, according to the admiral, because state profitability is no problem for them. In his opinion, political advantage is most important and the Soviets will pay any price to secure it.

MEETING WITH TERRITORIAL VICE PRESIDENT LEONTIEFF

The delegation met with Territorial Vice President Alexander Leontieff, who also serves as Minister of Economy, to discuss local government issues.

In response to questions regarding the economy of French Polynesia, Mr. Leontieff informed the delegation that parallel to the political progress, the territory has experienced economic progress as well. He stated that the gross domestic product per inhabitant is now $6,000, and that the standard of living is higher than any of the other island nations in the South Pacific region.

In response to questions regarding the impact of the Pacific Test Center on the economy, Mr. Leontieff stated that 3,000 jobs were created by the establishment of the center by the President of France in 1966. In his opinion, relocating the center would be a devastating blow to the healthy economy currently enjoyed by the French Polynesians.

Vice President Leontieff also cited conclusions of a report by a committee of scientists which revealed that the level of radiation at the testing site is normal and is, in fact, lower than some other countries. He further indicated that during the 20-year life of the center, no genetic malformations have been found in humans as a result of the presence of the center.

In regard to France's nuclear problems in the region, Mr. Leontieff reminded the delegation that France and the United States have important roles to play in the protection of the free world and, therefore, each must maintain a strong nuclear deterrent force. He emphasized that France has no suitable alternative to the

Mururoa site and plans to continue its nuclear testing at that location.

New Zealand

The delegation visited New Zealand from January 10, 1986 through January 14, 1986. For a good part of this time most delegation members traveled to Antarctica, departing on January 11, 1986 and returning on January 14, 1986. During the delegation's visit it met with representatives of the U.S. Embassy, New Zealand Government and military, New Zealand's opposition political party, and the U.S. Antarctic program.

Meeting with David Caygill, Minister of Trade and Industry

Because a major goal of the visit was to engage in a dialogue with the New Zealand Government concerning its denial of visits by U.S. Navy ships and the effect of this policy on the Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) Alliance, the delegation sought meetings with government officials responsible for setting this policy. The delegation met with the New Zealand government's representative, Mr. David Caygill, Minister of Trade and Industry, on January 10, 1986. The discussion centered on current New Zealand policy with respect to visits by U.S. Navy ships, legislation currently pending in the New Zealand Parliament on this matter, and the future of the ANZUS Alliance.

As described by U.S. Embassy officials, the policy of New Zealand's current government is to deny port access to any ship that is nuclear-propelled or that is capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Adopted after the 1984 elections, this policy was used in February 1985 to deny a port visit to the U.S.S. *Buchanan*, a conventionally powered guided missile destroyer.

Since that time legislation has been introduced in the New Zealand Parliament to formalize the ship visit policy. In addition to continuing the ban on visits by nuclear-propelled ships or transit of such ships through New Zealand territorial waters, the legislation would also make it the prime minister's responsibility to determine if port access to nuclear-capable ships and access to airfields by nuclear-capable aircraft should be granted. In doing so, the prime minister would have to certify the absence of nuclear weapons on board these platforms. Discussions with Mr. Caygill failed to reveal the process by which such determination would be made by the prime minister.

The delegation stressed that both current New Zealand policy and the proposed legislation are contrary to U.S. interests, in that they contravene U.S. policy to neither confirm nor deny the presence or absence of nuclear weapons aboard its ships and aircraft—a policy New Zealand seemed to understand. Essential to the maintenance of the U.S. nuclear deterrent, this policy is accepted by the overwhelming majority of the world's nations and has provided a reasonable and safe way to deal with this matter for over 40 years.

Minister Caygill stated that his government's policy was not formulated to injure the United States or the ANZUS Alliance. Rather, it was instituted in response to majority public opinion in New Zealand against being part of a nuclear weapons system. Ac-

cording to Minister Caygill the New Zealand Government believes that its nuclear weapons policy is consistent with the U.S. neither-confirm-nor-deny policy and the ANZUS Treaty, and that New Zealand does not wish to withdraw from ANZUS.

Minister Caygill also stated that his government is merely being more explicit about a policy it has followed in years past, and that at no time in the past did New Zealand ever have nuclear weapons in its territory. In sum, Mr. Caygill noted that the current New Zealand government, through its legislative proposal on ship visits, is seeking to reach an accommodation between New Zealand public opinion and U.S. policy on nuclear weapons.

In response, delegation members stressed that current New Zealand policy and proposed legislation on ship visits are unilateral attempts to limit the actions of an ANZUS partner, the United States, without prior consultation. Although New Zealand apparently views the ANZUS Treaty as only a regional security arrangement, the United States instead sees ANZUS as part of a larger framework of free-world alliances aimed at halting Soviet expansion and deterring nuclear conflict.

The delegation members made it clear that the current Government of New Zealand seemed to want to "have it both ways" on the matter; that is, to assuage the public's sentiments against nuclear weapons while satisfying their pro-ANZUS feelings. New Zealand's actions make it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for the United States to carry out its obligations under ANZUS. With over 40 percent of U.S. Navy ships nuclear propelled and over 80 percent capable of carrying nuclear weapons, it would be impossible for the United States to segregate its fleet to satisfy New Zealand policy. Thus, a schism has been created that has damaged the status quo. The delegation told Mr. Caygill that the people of New Zealand should be made aware of these facts.

During the discussion delegation members raised a number of additional points concerning New Zealand's proposed legislation. Among these were the great harm that the legislation's restrictions on aircraft landing rights could have on the U.S. Antarctic program. With its main base at Christchurch the program is very heavily dependent on the lifeline provided by flights from New Zealand. Another point raised was the potentially disruptive effects New Zealand's actions could have on the ability of the free world governments to gain consensus on nuclear weapons issues. Finally, delegation members noted—and Mr. Caygill confirmed—that the proposed legislative ban on nuclear-propelled ships would be a significant escalation in New Zealand's anti-nuclear stance.

ANTARCTIC BRIEFING

The delegation received a briefing on January 10, 1986 in preparation for its visit to Antarctica and in explanation of the major U.S. presence in New Zealand. Mr. Walter Seelig of the National Science Foundation explained the geography and climate of the Antarctic continent and the role of the National Science Foundation in sponsoring scientific research there.

Commander W.A. Jones, USN, Commanding Officer of the Christchurch detachment of the U.S. Naval Support Force, Antarc-

tica, explained in detail the role of his organization, which is a vital link between the United States and the U.S. presence in Antarctica.

OTHER MEETINGS

On January 13 several members of the delegation met in Auckland with Mr. Doug Graham, a member of parliament from Remuera and a member of the opposition National Party. Mr. Graham shared his party's views on the current situation. According to Mr. Graham the New Zealand National Party opposes the policy of the current government on ship visits and would actively seek to overturn any legislation on this matter that might be passed. He pointed out that the proposed legislation's ban on nuclear-propelled ships does not enjoy the same public support as the policy on nuclear-armed ships. Mr. Graham also noted that it was his party's policy to encourage the United States to sign the protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and to do so before the Soviet Union does. He indicated that such a move would help refute allegations by the New Zealand Left that the United States is unabashedly pro-nuclear. Mr. Graham urged the United States to continue to be firm in its dealings with the current government; but, in the interest of long-term stability, not to take steps to pull out of the ANZUS Treaty.

On January 13 several members of the delegation visited the Royal New Zealand Naval Base at Devenport and were briefed by Commodore Lincoln John Tempero, RNZN. The Devenport base supports a force of five frigates and provides training for New Zealand's Navy in anti-submarine warfare, a primary mission. According to Commodore Tempero the base employs some 3,000 uniformed personnel, 1,200 civilian dockyard workers and 850 other civilians.

Commodore Tempero indicated that because of New Zealand's location and remoteness there were no identifiable direct threats to the country, and that New Zealanders do not view the Soviet Union as a threat. He noted that because their country had never been invaded most New Zealanders continue to believe that no harm will come to them.

On the subject of United States/New Zealand military cooperation under ANZUS, Commodore Tempero told the delegation that a cutoff of military ties within the ANZUS Alliance would do significant harm to the readiness of his forces. This is because of the training value of working with United States and Australian ships, as well as the at-sea refueling support provided by United States ships to New Zealand's frigates.

The delegation also visited HMNZ Dockyard at Devenport, and was briefed by the Superintendent, Captain Terry O'Brien, RNZN. Employing about 1,200 civilian workers, the dockyard provides repair and modernization work, as well as oversight of shipwork done in private yards. Captain O'Brien noted continuing difficulties with recruiting qualified personnel for the yard because of strong competition from the commercial yards, and cited this as a main reason for the delay in completing the overhaul of HMNZS *Wellington.*

ANTARCTICA

The delegation, at the invitation and encouragement of the National Science Foundation (NSF), visited Antarctica to observe the ongoing U.S. participation in international scientific research and exploration of the world's last frontier. The members of the delegation were extremely impressed by the monumental efforts that are required to support the Antarctic programs, particularly in the area of logistics and advance program planning. An integral part of the success of this program is the support that is provided by the military services, primarily the U.S. Navy and, to a less extent, the Coast Guard, Army and the Air Force. The U.S. Coast Guard provides the critical ice-breaking support that is absolutely essential for the resupply of the Antarctic stations.

The delegation visited the Navy Support Facility at Christchurch, New Zealand. This facility, part of the U.S. Naval Support Force, Antarctica (NSFA), headquartered at the U.S. Naval Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California, maintains an active and influential U.S. presence in Antarctica and provides logistic support for activities on the Antarctic continent. Each year, under "Operation Deep Freeze", the Navy is involved in shipping thousands of tons of cargo and coordinating the transportation of hundreds of scientific and support personnel to and from Antarctica, including many of the isolated research sites throughout the continent.

During the summer season, October to March, the Navy relocates an LC-130 Hercules squadron from Point Magu, California, to Christchurch. These aircraft are the primary support aircraft used by the National Science Foundation on a reimbursable basis. These aircraft, specially equipped with skis on their landing gear, are the only aircraft in the world that are able to operate into all areas of Antarctica during the entire summer season. The U.S. Air Force provides airlift to McMurdo Station during the early months of the summer by utilizing C-141 Starlifter aircraft that land on wheels on an ice runway constructed each year for that purpose.

Departing Christchurch on an LC-130, the delegation flew to McMurdo Station, the largest of the U.S. facilities in Antarctica. McMurdo Station is located on Ross Island, in the shadow of Mt. Erebus, the continent's only active volcano. Constructed in 1955 as a staging base for inland research projects, McMurdo was not used for scientific research until after the International Geophysical Year, 1957. Today, McMurdo serves as the base for all air operations and is the closest port for ship resupply on the continent. While at McMurdo, the delegation was briefed on the ongoing scientific programs, which include earth sciences, biology, glaciology, oceanography, geology and the study of cosmic radiation and satellite movements.

Utilizing the LC-130 aircraft, the delegation flew to Amundsen/Scott South Pole Station. Located 850 miles from McMurdo Station, the South Pole station was dedicated in 1975 and consists of a large geodesic dome covering a smaller complex of buildings housing the living and working spaces for scientists carrying out research on glaciology, geophysics, meteorology, upper atmosphere physics, astronomy and bio-medical studies at the bottom of the world. During

the winter months the dome is home to 19 scientists and support personnel, while the summer community expands to as many as 70 people.

The delegation's presence in the Antarctic coincided with the unfortunate sinking of the *Southern Quest,* a ship supporting the privately sponsored "Footsteps of Scott" South Pole expedition. As circumstances proved, this British-registered vessel was inadequate to traverse the dangerous and unpredictable ice pack. The delegation was very much impressed with the timely and truly professional efforts of the Navy and Coast Guard helicopter crews that responded in less than one hour to effect the rescue of the *Southern Quest* crew.

At the completion of their stay in Antarctica, the delegation members were satisfied that the support the military services contribute to the U.S. presence in Antarctica is well justified. A by-product of the logistical support provided by service personnel is the training in arctic operations—land, sea and air. The delegation further recognizes the need to maintain the operations at Christchurch, New Zealand. If, due to the political situation in that country, the operation would have to be moved, the cost would be great in terms of the scientific programs, as well as the relocation costs.

AUSTRALIA

Australia, with a population in excess of 15 million and a land area roughly the size of continental United States, is the dominant nation in the South Pacific. It has a diversified and affluent economy with a gross domestic product in excess of $151 billion. Agricultural and mineral exports are the principal items in its foreign trade which, in 1982, amounted to $20 billion.

Since World War II Australia has played an increasingly active role in international affairs. It has devoted particular attention to nations of the region with special emphasis on ASEAN and the island nations of the South Pacific. Australia has played a leadership role among the islands in protesting French nuclear testing in the Pacific. The Australians believe that French testing should be conducted either in metropolitan France or in Corsica rather than in the Pacific.

Australia, New Zealand and the United States signed the ANZUS Security Treaty in September 1951. The treaty, which became effective in April 1952, binds the parties to recognize that an armed attack in the Pacific area on any of them would be a danger to the peace and safety of the others and commits them to consult and to meet the common danger in accordance with their respective constitutional processes. It also pledges the parties to maintain and develop their individual and collective capabilities to resist attack.

In fulfullment of their obligation under the ANZUS Treaty, the three nations conduct a variety of joint activities. These include regularly scheduled military exercises ranging from naval and landing exercises at the task group level to battalion-level special forces training. They also assign officers to serve with the armed forces of the other allies, seek to standardize equipment and operational doctrine and cooperate in various other projects. Among

these are several defense facilities in Australia jointly operated by Australian and U.S. personnel.

MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER BOB HAWKE

In his meeting with the delegation, Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke was firm in his support of the ANZUS Alliance. He said he wanted to assure the delegation that the Australian people and his government fully support the continuation of the ANZUS relationship. He said the ANZUS is not a political issue in Australia. The prime minister said his government is also firmly committed to continuation of the joint facilities operated by Australian and U.S. personnel in Australia.

The prime minister noted that his government has increased the Australian defense budget each year that it has been in power. He said that modernization of the Australian armed forces, including procurement of 75 F/A–18 aircraft, is a high priority of the Labor government.

Mr. Hawke said he regrets the dispute that has developed between the United States and New Zealand. He believes, however, that it must be resolved by those two countries. He said Australia has made its position clear to New Zealand, but will not attempt to harangue that government. The prime minister said that, although ANZUS may become inoperative as a result of the New Zealand position, he does not want to see it abrogated.

Australia took a leadership role in the development of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, according to the Prime Minister. He said that he has maintained communications with the U.S. Government throughout the development of the treaty, and made it clear that the SPNFZT would not in any way infringe upon Australia's obligation under ANZUS. An effort was made to ensure that the language and intent of the SPNFZT were consistent with ANZUS Treaty obligations. Mr. Hawke also said Australia would appreciate any support the United States can give to the three protocols to the SPNFZT.

Prime Minister Hawke expressed his concern with the farm bill in the U.S. Congress. He believes that such a protectionist move by the United States is not a proper response to the trade problem. He said Australia is among the most efficient agricultural nations and does not subsidize its programs. The prime minister believes that the Food Security Act of 1985 will have a deleterious effect on Australia's agriculture.

MEETING WITH FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY, DAVID MARSHAL SADLIER, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The delegation met with First Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs David Sadlier concerning the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. Mr. Sadlier said that the concern of the South Pacific nations with nuclear issues goes back to 1966 when France transferred its nuclear test facilities from Algeria to Mururoa.

Mr. Sadlier said that the South Pacific Forum was established in 1971. At its first meeting it expressed the concern of the members about French nuclear testing. Its opposition to testing caused the

French to abandon atmospheric testing in favor of underground tests. Mr. Sadlier said that the opposition of the forum members has not been diminished by that change in the method of testing.

Australia assumed a leadership role in the forum in order to provide a rational and responsible guide in developing the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. It feared that some of the more emotional nations might take a more radical position in opposing French testing. The aim of Australia, according to Mr. Sadlier, was to channel the efforts of the forum into a constructive program. He believes this approach has been successful, as some of the nations favored going much further than the treaty.

Only the nations of the forum have been invited to sign the treaty. The first protocol is addressed to nations not within the South Pacific, but which have territories there—Britain, France and the United States. The remaining two protocols are addressed to the five nuclear powers. Mr. Sadlier said that he believes the treaty is beneficial to U.S. interests, as well as those of the forum nations, and for this reason hopes the United States will consider the protocols favorably.

MEETING WITH AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE

The delegation met with Senator K.W. Sibraa, Chairman, and several members of the Joint Committee. The committee agenda currently includes inquiries into Australia's relations with the South Pacific nations and its relations with the Philippines, as well as disarmament and arms control.

This committee has taken no formal action concerning the New Zealand policy concerning ship visits; but the views expressed by the various members covered the spectrum from the left wing of the Australian Labor Party to the more conservative positions of the Liberal and National Party members. It was evident that, within the Australian Labor Party, there is a minority that favors the New Zealand position on port visits by nuclear-capable ships. The committee members, however, overwhelmingly favor continuation of the ANZUS Alliance. They noted that New Zealanders do not see themselves threatened while Australians do.

While the New Zealand position is believed to pose a threat to ANZUS, most of the members recommended a cautious U.S. approach in dealing with New Zealand. Rather than consider retaliatory actions, the Australian parliamentarians recommended that the United States move slowly, talk quietly and give New Zealand an opportunity to reconsider its position. They stated a harsh U.S. policy toward New Zealand might result in an unfavorable reaction in Australia. It was pointed out that New Zealand, through its participation in earlier wars, purchased with the blood of its young men the right to forbearance by the United States in this matter.

The Australian parliamentarians were also firm in their support of the joint facilities located in Australia. They recognize that those facilities might be a Soviet target in the event of nuclear war; nevertheless, their contribution to nuclear deterrence is recognized and considered worth the risk.

MEETING WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE KIM BEAZLEY

Defense Minister Kim Beazley briefed the delegation on Australian defense policy and the government's views on ANZUS at Stirling Naval Base in Western Australia. He noted that ANZUS is a central feature in Australia's foreign policy.

Mr. Beazley stated that the aim of Australian defense policy was self-reliance, which he distinguished from isolationism. He said that Australia's major area of strategic concern covers approximately 12 percent of the earth's surface. In that area Australia sees problems which the United States does not view as problems.

A close review of the defense structure was conducted recently. As a result it was decided to replace the only Australian aircraft carrier with new air bases constructed at various points across the country to increase the ability of the Australian Air Force to respond to threats from any quarter.

Mr. Beazley noted the critical importance of U.S. technology to Australia's weapons programs. He said that about 20 percent of Australia's defense budget is spent in the United States. He also emphasized the critical value of the joint facilities to the United States.

In discussing the ANZUS relationship, Mr. Beazley said the question of many in his country was whether the guarantee of ANZUS is real, while many others fear that it makes Australia a target. The aim of the government, he said, is to view the alliance realistically—not in its future commitments, but in the current benefits which it provides.

Mr. Beazley expressed concern over the current crisis in ANZUS and cautioned against termination of the alliance over the ship-visit problem. He said ship visits are New Zealand's most important contribution to the alliance. Conversely, Australia, in providing joint facilities to the United States, makes a much different contribution. Mr. Beazley stressed that the problem is between New Zealand and the United States and they must resolve it. In the meantime Australia still carries on a bilateral relationship with New Zealand despite disruption in the New Zealand-U.S. relationship.

The Minister of Defense said Australian disagreement with the Strategic Defense Initiatives has been expressed. He said Australia is concerned with the consequences of nuclear war. It believes that deterrence remains the only viable approach to ensure stable Soviet-United States relations.

FIJI

Fiji comprises a group of volcanic islands in the South Pacific located about 2,775 miles southwest of Honolulu, Hawaii. Of its 322 islands, only 100 are inhabited. The estimated population is 695,000, and English is the official language. Fiji was a British possession until October 10, 1970, when it became a fully sovereign and independent nation within the Commonwealth. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Chief of State and Ratu Sir Kamisese K.T. Mara is Prime Minister.

Among developing nations, Fiji's accomplishments over the 15 years since its independence are remarkable. The government has

dedicated itself to economic and social progress, and real advances have been made in the fields of education, agriculture, health and nutrition.

Fiji has a well-justified reputation as a democracy with an excellent human rights record and a firm commitment to international peacekeeping efforts. The Royal Fiji Military Force consists of three battalions or 2,000 personnel. Unique for a country of its size, Fiji maintains a 500-member battalion with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai, and a 600-member battalion with the United Nations Forces in Lebanon. Recent action by the Government of Fiji to end its ban on port visits by U.S. nuclear-powered warships is another example of the country's commitment to world peace.

U.S. relations with Fiji, while always cordial, have grown closer over the last five years. This closeness was recently manifested in Fiji's decision to become the first Pacific island nation to name an ambassador to the United States separate from its mission to the United Nations.

MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR C. EDWARD DILLERY

During extensive briefings by U.S. Ambassador C. Edward Dillery and his country team, the delegation learned that, although Fiji shares the concerns of most island states on nuclear issues, it is a voice for moderation and a force for responsibility in the region. Like its inland neighbors, the Government of Fiji opposes French nuclear testing at Mururoa, and would like to see the French government relocate its test center from the South Pacific region.

In response to questions concerning the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (SPNFZ) Treaty, Ambassador Dillery advised the delegation that Fiji was the first member of the South Pacific Forum to sign the treaty. He further stated that Prime Minister Mara considers it a moderate document and has urged the United States to sign the protocols.

Ambassador Dillery emphasized that, while there are many issues of concern to the United States in the SPNFZ Treaty, there is no concern that the treaty would place serious limitations on the ability of U.S. warships and aircraft to transit the region.

MEETING WITH APISAI TORA, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT AND WORKS

The delegation met with Mr. Apisai Tora, Minister for Communications, Transport and Works, in the cabinet of Prime Minister Mara, for discussions on a wide range of subjects including the long and friendly relationship between the United States and Fiji that has existed since World War II when Fiji was the staging area for the invasion of Guadalcanal. The delegation was interested to learn that the airstrip constructed by U.S. forces for that purpose is now the International Airport at Nadi.

Although friction has recently developed between the United States and Fiji over sugar quotas, U.S. tuna boats fishing in what Fiji considers territorial waters, and a bilateral aid agreement, it

was learned that discussions are presently underway between our two governments in an effort to resolve the problems expeditiously.

HAWAII

MEETING WITH CINCPAC ADMIRAL RONALD HAYS

Admiral Hays said that based on his six months of command he would like to provide the delegation with his views on the military situation in the area. He said militarily the position of the United States and its allies in the area has been improving in the past several years. Still he said he had several areas of concern, which he breaks down into the following six categories:

1. *North Korea.*—He said the potentially volatile relations between North Korea and South Korea are a continuing problem. He said the improved relations between China and the United States are helping to ameliorate the situation.

2. *Vietnam.*—Continuing efforts by Vietnam to take over Cambodia are also a serious problem in the area. Vietnam realizes the ASEAN group of nations do not have significant military resources to restrain it, and is therefore proceeding boldly. The admiral said our friendly relations with the Chinese and the known Chinese aversion to Vietnam's efforts may provide a dampening effect on Vietnam's moves.

3. *Philippines.*—Admiral Hays said the situation in the Philippines will be bad irrespective of the winner of the February 7 election. He said the economic problem is so bad that aid will have to be provided to the Philippines to save the situation. He said that he was concerned about the maintenance of a stable government if the political divisions are not amicably resolved and the economic health of the region is not tended to.

4. *Anti-nuclear sentiments in the theater.*—Admiral Hays said these sentiments are real. He said that 10 of the 13 nations in the region signed the nuclear-free-zone proposal advanced by Australia in the first year. Admiral Hays said his command could "live" with the nuclear-free-zone proposal, since such necessary military operations as transit in international waters would not be impeded. He said the one area which caused a major problem was the third protocol, which prohibits nuclear testing in the area. France's only nuclear test area is in the proposed nuclear free zone; thus, the treaty would stop France from developing nuclear weapons. The admiral said this would be a serious matter since it would impede France from continuing to support us in our deterrent efforts. He said the French contributions in these efforts are major and their loss would be serious.

The admiral said he is certain the Soviets will endorse the proposal since it will advance their wedge-driving efforts between the United States and its allies. He said the worst thing that could occur is if we vacillate and delay action on the proposal for several years and then finally sign it. He believes it would be vastly better if we endorsed the protocols immediately.

5. *Our presence in Indian Ocean.*—He said maintaining a continued presence in the Indian Ocean has drawn heavily on his resources. Admiral Hays said the military presence is being main-

tained and that it is important that it continue to be maintained. He said a full carrier battle group is deployed in the Indian Ocean, and that the logistics base of Diego Garcia, which is of vital importance, is being manned.

6. *Soviet deployment.*—The increased presence of the Soviet military forces in the theater is the greatest source of concern according to Admiral Hays. He said the Soviets have increased their quality and quantity of military resources. He said the improved quality of the ships deployed by the Soviets is the greatest cause for concern. Admiral Hays said that at present about one-third of the Soviet Navy and Air Force is deployed in the Pacific theater. He said that the Chinese are helping us relative to the Soviets by tying up large land forces which have been deployed against China.

Admiral Hays, in response to a query, said our relations with Australia are superb, in contrast to relations with New Zealand. Australia has informed Admiral Hays that there need be no concern about our access to Australian ports. He said Prime Minister Hawke knows how much the United States contributes to the security of the area and is appreciative of this support.

APPENDIX

(Wall Street Journal--Wednesday, March 5, 1986)

Restless Region

Long Ignored as Safe, South Pacific Islands Now Vex Washington

A Troubled Area Is Resentful Over U.S. Fishing Policy, French Tests of Weapons

The Russian Bear Is Flirting

By James P. Sterba
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

AUCKLAND, New Zealand--Think of the South Pacific. Paradise usually springs to mind. Lush, idyllic vacation spots like Tahiti and Fiji. Cute little countries like Tonga, with a king who takes up two first-class airline seats, and Tuvalu, which earns its way in the world mainly by selling colorful postage stamps to collectors.

There is Papua New Guinea, with its vast, exotic jungles. But you have to squint to find the others on an average-size globe: Kiribati, Vanuatu, Western Samoa--in all, two dozen microstates, five million people, some 1,300 islands, most of them so tiny and far away from the world's troubles that it is difficult to conceive of their causing trouble or being troubled themselves.

That has been Washington's view, too. The affection that the U.S. gained by pushing Imperial Japan out of the region four decades ago seemed boundless. Diplomacy, what little seemed required, was often put in the hands of generous campaign contributors who had to consult maps to discover exactly where they were going as ambassadors. With two staunch allies, Australia and New Zealand, looking after the region, it was an easy part of the world to ignore.

A 40-Year Policy

Not anymore. With U.S. policy in its 40th year of what a Heritage Foundation study calls "benign neglect," the Reagan administration has discovered that neglect has its price. The region is troubled economically and socially. It is angry over U.S. fishing policy and French nuclear-weapons tests in the area. Anti-West Third World rhetoric is on the rise. The Soviet Union's flirtations are beginning to pay off.

On Dec. 28, the New Zealand Times summed up the trends in an article that began: "This may be remembered as the year the Pacific Ocean ceased to be an American lake."

That is overstating it, Western diplomats say. But U.S. military strategists, for one, are disturbed by what they see. While the end of the presidential crisis in the Philippines would seem to improve the odds of America's holding on to its bases there, that can't be considered certain, and when these strategists look for backup positions in the Pacific, the view is no longer so pleasant. To have to worry about--let alone contest for influence in--a huge watery patch of the globe that has been uncontested since World War II isn't appealing.

Flirting Back

Most regional leaders don't savor the prospects of superpower competition, either, although they have discovered that the best way to get the Reagan administration's attention is to flirt back at Communists. They are doing so because today theirs is a region of resentment. U.S. tuna boats and U.S. support of French nuclear-

weapons testing on the Polynesian atoll of Mururoa have fertilized budding anti-Americanism and used up much residual good will.

Meanwhile, the Anzus alliance, a mutual-security pact between Australia, New Zealand and the U.S., is under strain, perhaps unraveling. And Australia and New Zealand, especially the latter, are under growing pressure—from anti-nuclear groups, leftist trade unions, environmentalists and peace groups—to abrogate the treaty, kick out U.S. military facilities, dismantle joint intelligence-gathering and communications sites, and even join the nonaligned movement.

These groups have helped organize islanders into anti-U.S. groups as well. Through some leftist New Zealand trade unions, Moscow dispenses money and support.

U.S.-New Zealand Rift

Prime Minister David Lange of New Zealand carried out a popular 1984 campaign pledge of banning U.S. warships' port visits unless the U.S. certifies that the ships are nuclear-free—which it won't. Fearing that the New Zealand action might be copied elsewhere, the U.S. retaliated with strong denunciations and suspended all military cooperation with New Zealand. The U.S. also cut New Zealand out of a secret and elite intelligence-sharing network that includes the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia and involves swapping secrets that the U.S. won't share, for example, with NATO.

The U.S.-New Zealand actions strained relations and rendered largely inoperative the 35-year-old Anzus alliance, which most island leaders viewed as a regional security blanket. The U.S. retaliation made it difficult for New Zealand to carry out what had been its primary intelligence-gathering mission in the five-power network: keeping a military and political eye on the South Pacific.

The region's nuclear allergy was aggravated when French agents bombed a Greenpeace environmental protest ship, the Rainbow Warrior, in Auckland harbor, killing a photographer. The ship had been en route to Mururoa to protest French testing, which has gone on underground since 1975 and was carried out in the atmosphere before that.

Eight nations of the 13-member South Pacific Forum, including Australia and New Zealand, meanwhile agreed to a treaty creating a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. Australia declined to cooperate with the U.S. in MX missile testing.

Of far more immediate concern, however, was Moscow's success, for the first time, in getting an economic-cooperation agreement with one of the microstates. The Republic of Kiribati, frustrated by U.S. fishing abuses, last summer opened its 1.4 million square miles of Central Pacific waters to a Soviet fishing fleet.

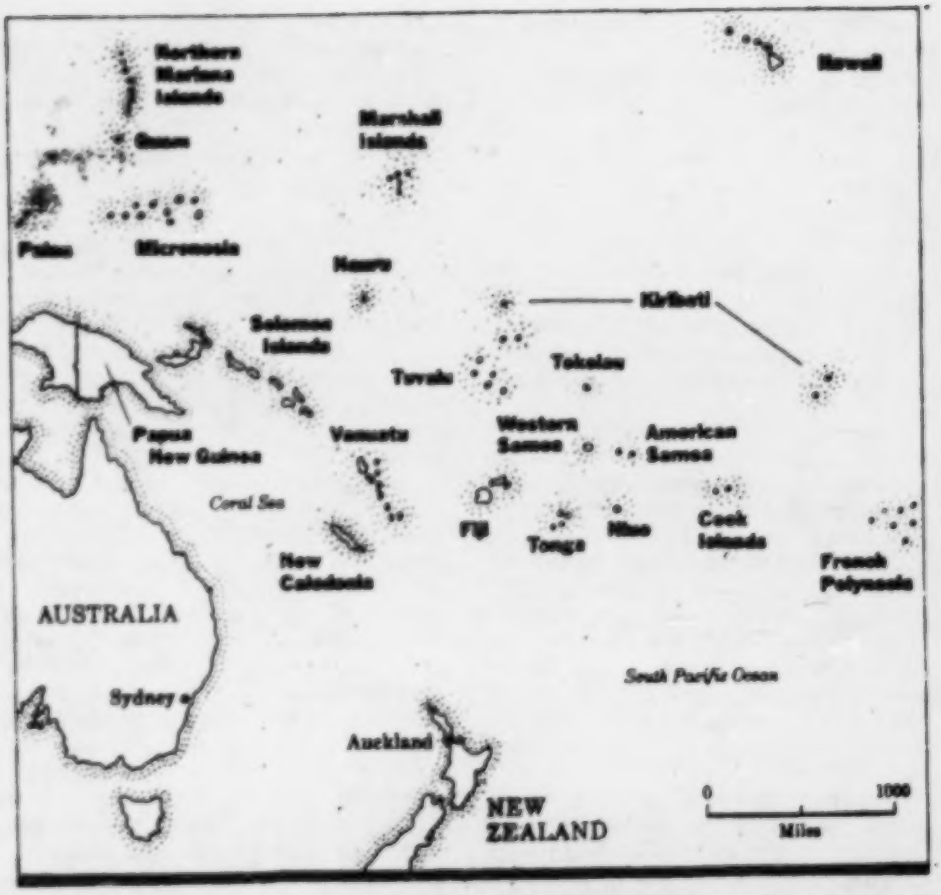
And last fall, Soviet cruise liners, banned from plying the region in retaliation for the Afghanistan invasion six years ago, were invited back in to help a sagging tourist trade. (On Feb. 16, one of them struck a reef and sank in New Zealand's Cook Strait.)

At least six financially strapped nations in the region—Fiji, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa—received fresh offers of Soviet aid and economic cooperation last year. Such offers have been spurned in the past. Now, some leaders suggest that they will wait and see how the Kiribati fishing arrangement works out before turning Moscow down. The accord nets Kiribati $1.7 million, about 10% of its national budget. Other aid-dependent islanders could use that kind of money, too.

In the meantime, Vanuatu, already best friends with Cuba, has agreed to receive Vietnamese foreign aid in the form of a medical-aid team sent by Hanoi. And in New Caledonia, pro-independence forces acknowledge that one faction in their coalition sent a team to Libya for training in the fall of 1984. They say they haven't ruled out another visit.

Even Western successes have their qualifications. While the voters of Palau, for example, have just overwhelmingly approved a new political relationship with Washington that gives military concessions to the U.S., the arrangement also bars the use, testing or storing of nuclear weapons there.

While the Soviets increase their friendly overtures in the region—for example, by passing out free airline tickets to visit Russia and offering scholarships to study there—anti-American feelings are growing and regional diplomats blame the Reagan administration.



Mr. Reagan's first-term rejection of the 1982 Law of the Sea treaty was viewed by islanders as an official endorsement for U.S. fishing vessels to steal their most valuable economic resource: tuna. Under a 1976 U.S. law, tuna are exempt from claims of a 200-mile economic-zone because they are a "highly migratory species." So U.S. tuna fishermen freely take catches in violation of the laws of the island nations involved. The Reagan administration also angers islanders by backing French colonial claims to French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

"The United States must stop stomping around the South Pacific like a heedless hippopotamus, following damaging policies dictated by North Atlantic interests," says an editorial in Pacific Islands Monthly, an Australian-based magazine that reflects regional thinking.

Military Concerned

All this hardly makes for the next superpower flashpoint. But a succession of U.S. Pacific military commanders, including Adm. William J. Crowe, who is currently the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have expressed concern and quietly lobbied the Reagan administration to clean up its act in the region. That process began last summer, after the Anzus crisis and the Kiribati-Soviet fishing agreement, when Secretary of State George Shultz toured the region.

A December 1984 study for the State Department's Office of Long Range Assessments and Research notes that "the bull is not yet amongst the china" but that the situation could quickly change. Good will toward the U.S. is large, the study said, but "the real question is how long can the reservoir be tapped without replenishment?" Discussing Soviet offers to trade aid for fishing rights, the study went on:

"The current U.S. fishing difficulties in the region do make the Soviet fisheries offers appear more attractive than perhaps they would otherwise. Secondly, the financial problems of the smaller atoll countries are perceived to be such that cash income

even from the Soviet Union would be difficult to refuse."

Contrary to the travel brochures, most of the microstates are economically troubled. They have growing populations, rising numbers of restless unemployed youths, and spreading problems with urbanization, crime, suicide, alcoholism and drug abuse.

As a group, the microstates receive more foreign aid per capita than any other place in the world, although the amount is relatively small because total populations are tiny. But living space is tiny, too, and unhealthful.

Randy Thaman, who heads the University of the South Pacific's school of social and economic development, says the South Pacific is one of the world's most unhealthful places to live. Other parts of the world may be slowly winning battles against diseases. Not this region. Malaria, hepatitis, meningitis, intestinal diseases, tuberculosis, anemia, syphilis and gonorrhea are growing health problems. There are no sewers, sanitary garbage removal or clean-water sources for most islanders. Thus, diarrhea has become a major killer.

Enormous political, social and economic changes were under way in the region long before the Soviet bear began dangling his toe in these tropical waters. At World War II's end, six Western colonial powers administered island dependencies. Today, most are independent nations or moving toward sovereignty.

By the late 1970s, most had staked claim to waters and resources within 200 miles of their shores in accordance with Law of the Sea deliberations, as did the U.S. and other maritime nations. Instead of a Pacific dotted by island pinpricks, says F. Rawdon Dalrymple, the Australian ambassador to the U.S., "you suddenly had a map where huge areas of the earth's surface were marked off [with claims of] political entities most of which were virtually unknown to the outside world."

Five Million Square Miles

They claim, in fact, about 5.6 million square miles of sovereign territory—an area almost twice the size of the continental U.S., and there is precious little free ocean left. Most of these tiny nations have few land resources to exploit beyond coconuts; the 200-mile economic zones gave regional leaders the hope that for the first time, economic self-sufficiency might be possible.

But fisheries development is only beginning. In the meantime, says the Heritage Foundation study:

"The World War II generation of island leaders is being succeeded by a younger generation, whose concern with economic development and anger over perceived U.S. insensitivity make them susceptible to Soviet offers of economic assistance as well as to pleas by Third World radicals to join the Third World bloc in its anti-West, anti-U.S. and anti-free-market policies."

Despite these trends, the Soviets haven't made much headway until now, largely because of painstaking diplomacy by Australia and New Zealand. "Dealing with these micro- and mini-states requires a very delicate touch—a feel for the cultures involved, close personal contacts and a fine sense of how much is enough," Owen Harries, a former Australian diplomat, wrote in the American magazine Commentary.

He added that it was "doubtful whether the U.S. could do it anything like or as well as its allies."

Island Leaders Say U.S. Tuna Policy Is Made by Association in San Diego

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL *Staff Reporter*

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Most people think that American foreign policy is made in Washington and carried out by State Department diplomats. But they think otherwise in the island microstates of the South Pacific.

U.S. policy, island leaders charge, is made in San Diego, the home of the American Tunaboat Association, and carried out by poachers who are protected by Washington.

Tuna is the island nations' most important economic resource, and U.S. fishing policy angers them in two ways. First, Washington doesn't recognize their 200-mile economic-zone claims as far as tuna is concerned. Second, the Fisheries Protection Act of 1967 provides that if any nation seizes a U.S. fishing boat, Washington must impose an embargo on all fish products from that nation. The same law also requires Washington to reimburse the boat owner for the costs of the seizure and of recovering the boat and to pay him the amount of money he would have made fishing if the boat hadn't been stopped.

'Buccaneering Behavior'

"The buccaneering behavior of the American Tunaboat Association" infuriates island countries even more than French nuclear weapons testing in French Polynesia, says the region's news magazine, Pacific Islands Monthly.

But U.S. tuna fishermen say they couldn't compete with cheap foreign imports without Washington's protection. August Felando, the president of the American Tunaboat Association, notes that 21 of the 33 boats in the U.S. tuna fleet are currently tied up in bankruptcy proceedings.

Partly because of chicken's increased popularity, tuna prices to fishermen have dropped to about $700 a ton from $1,100 a ton four years ago, he says. Fast, modern purse-seiners, with on-board helicopters to locate tuna schools, cost $10 million five years ago; Mr. Felando says they are for sale at half that now.

Other tuna fleets, from Japan and South Korea, for example, pay island nations annual fees to fish. The U.S. fleet has had similar agreements with a few island nations in the past but has none now. After a visit to the region last summer, Secretary of State George Shultz ordered a speedup of talks on the issue.

Kiribati-Soviet Pact

The president of Kiribati, Ieremia Tabai, says that anger over U.S. fishing policy is what propelled his tiny nation to sign a fishing agreement last August with the Soviet Union—Moscow's first ever in the region.

Kiribati is a nation of 62,000 people on 33 tiny islands, including Tarawa, which cost some 3,000 U.S. Marine casualties to take from Japan during World War II. It lives off a tiny copra crop, foreign aid and fishing agreements.

The one-year Soviet accord allows 16 trawlers to fish in a maritime zone of about 1.4 million square miles. The Soviets paid about 20% more than the going rate for the agreement. Cost: $1.7 million. In contrast, it cost U.S. taxpayers an estimated $3.5 million after a single U.S. tuna boat, the Jeanette Diana, was seized on poaching charges in June 1984 by the government of the Solomon Islands.